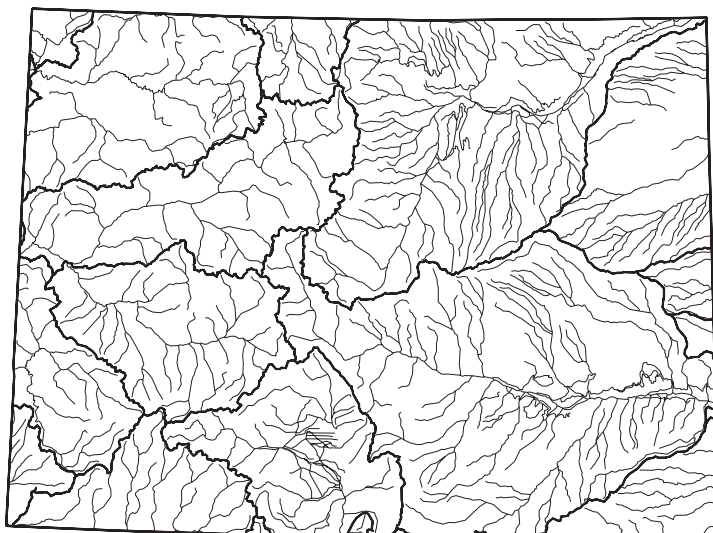


# Colorado



— Basin Boundaries  
(USGS 6-Digit Hydrologic Unit)

For a copy of the Colorado 1996 305(b) report, contact:

**John Farrow**

Colorado Department of Public  
Health and Environment  
Water Quality Control Division  
4300 Cherry Creek Drive, South  
Denver, CO 80222-1530  
(303) 692-3575

## Surface Water Quality

Colorado reports that 89% of its surveyed river miles and 91% of its surveyed lake acres have good water quality that fully supports designated uses. Metals are the most frequently identified pollutant in rivers and lakes. High nutrient concentrations also degrade many lake acres. Agriculture and mining are the leading sources of pollution in rivers.

Agriculture, construction, urban runoff, and municipal sewage treatment plants are the leading sources of pollution in lakes.

## Ground Water Quality

Ground water quality in Colorado ranges from excellent in mountain areas where snow fall is heavy, to poor in alluvial aquifers of major rivers. Naturally occurring soluble minerals along with human activities are responsible for significant degradation of some aquifers. Nitrates and salts from agricultural activities have contaminated many of Colorado's shallow aquifers. In mining areas, acidic water and metals contaminate aquifers. Colorado protects ground water quality with statewide numeric criteria for organic chemicals, a narrative standard to maintain ambient conditions or Maximum Contaminant Levels of inorganic chemicals and metals, and specific use classifications and standards for ground water areas. Colorado also regulates discharges to ground water from wastewater treatment impoundments and land application systems with a permit system.

## Programs to Restore Water Quality

Colorado's nonpoint source program supports a wide range of projects. Ten projects were funded to identify appropriate treatment

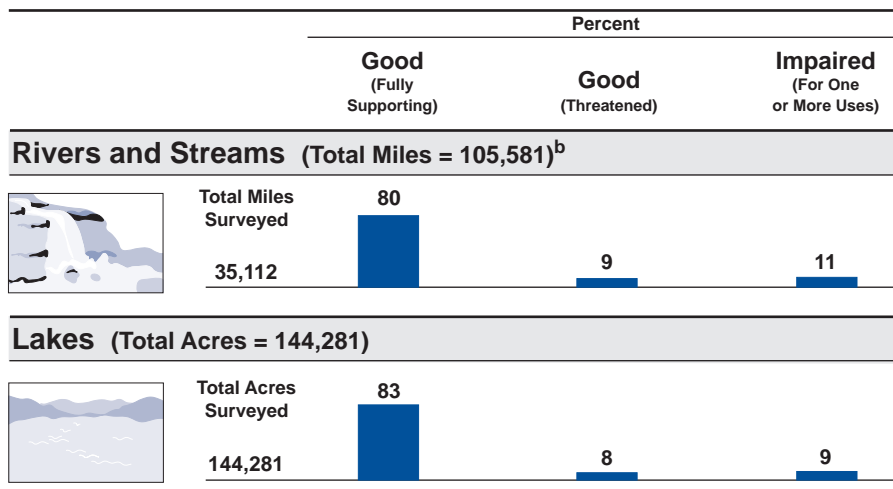
options for waters polluted by abandoned mines. Several projects identified and funded implementation of good management practices for riparian (streamside) areas. Under another project, Colorado developed agreements with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service to ensure that these agencies apply effective best management practices to control non-point runoff from grazing, timber harvesting, and road construction activities on Federal lands.

## Programs to Assess Water Quality

During the 1994 305(b) reporting cycle, Colorado switched over from a statewide monitoring program to a basinwide monitoring strategy. The basinwide monitoring strategy allows that State to intensify monitoring in one basin per year, rather than perform infrequent sampling statewide. Colorado retained some of the old fixed-station sampling sites to monitor statewide trends in water quality conditions.

The basin chosen to be analyzed during this reporting period (1994-1995) on a watershed approach was the Arkansas Basin.

## Summary of Use Support<sup>a</sup> in Colorado



<sup>a</sup> Summary use support is presented because Colorado did not report individual use support in its 1996 Section 305(b) report.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.